

**Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission
Meeting Minutes**

March 14, 2014, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Association of Chinese Americans, Inc. Chinese Community Center
32585 Concord Drive, Madison Heights, MI
Corrections issues: June 20, 2014

Attendance

Present: Asim Alavi, Nasim Ansari, Connie Dang, Willie Dechavez, Hannah Feikama, Mumtaz Haque, Jamie Hsu, Ph.D., Roland Hwang, Soraya Kim, Anand Kumar, David Long, Toshiki Masaki, Ryan Rosario, Henry Tanaki, Ramesh Verma, H. Sook Wilkinson, Ph.D., Peter Wong, Tsu-Yin Wu

Conference Call-In: Guozhen Lu, Ph.D. and Jeffrey Vang

Also Present: Bing Goei, Director, Office for New Americans, Christina Mui, APACC and Theresa Tran, APIA-Vote Michigan

Unable to attend: Mamatha Chamarthi and Mary McLellan (MDCR)

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Jamie Hsu called the regular meeting of the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission to order at 9:10 a.m. on March 14, 2014.

II. Welcome & Introductions

Jamie welcomed our new commissioner, David Long. Introductions included: Bing Goei, Director of the Office for New Americans, Christina Mui, Assistant Director of APACC and Theresa Tran, President of APIA-Vote Michigan

Approval of Minutes

Correction in the December 6, 2013 minutes under Old Business - Budget Update: The year of 2013-14 should be 2012-13 appropriation is \$103,800. Peter Wong moved for approval of minutes. Ramesh Verma seconded. Motion passed.

III. Introduction of Special Guest: Bing Goei, Director, Office for New Americans

Bing Goei shared Governor Snyder's goals of making Michigan a welcoming State to immigrants with advanced academic degrees or entrepreneurial aspirations; allowing the state to benefit from their contributions, including job creation.

Mr. Goei said that the Office for New Americans will drive strategies for attracting immigrants to Michigan. He stated that the Governor would like to create a culture for immigrants to feel welcome here and to have advocates to help them participate in our system. The Office for New Americans is a coordinating office that will find common ground in the state departments' duties and initiatives and prioritize them to ensure that we are able to accomplish the goals collaboratively. The Office for New Americans will be the chief advisor for the governor, legislators and the state departments.

Bing Goei shared the Governor's initiatives that include extra EB-2 visas to 50,000 individuals over five years for employment-based visas. Detroit would be allocated extra 5,000 employment-based visas in the first year; 10,000 each year in the second, third and fourth years; and 15,000 in the fifth year. The program envisions reviving Detroit's economy by bringing in new, educated, skilled and talented

entrepreneurs from all over the world by providing them a pathway to US citizenship. The Mayor of Detroit and Governor have sent a letter to the President of United States, asking for 50,000 extra visas. The chances are not very high, but they are hopeful to get some extra visas.

The Governor also is urging Washington to approve Michigan's application to become a state-sponsored EB-5 regional center to attract investment and create jobs for Michigan workers. Vermont is the only other state that has a regional center designation from the federal government. Consequently, Vermont has managed to attract over \$300 million investments in the last five years.

Mr. Goei said that in light of these new initiatives, the MAPAAC has a very important role to play in the coming years.

He said that MAPAAC should partner closely with both the Executive and the Legislative branches of the State to prevent policies and laws that can discourage immigrants and investments from the Asian continent.

Bing thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak about the initiative and said that MAPAAC will play an important role in the reinvention of Michigan. Jamie concluded by saying that MAPAAC is looking forward to a strong and lasting relationship with the Office for New Americans.

IV. Fiduciary Organization of "Friends of MAPAAC" Discussion

The topic of discussion was finding a fiduciary organization who would accept any monetary donations for the annual APA Heritage Celebration. Jamie said that MilIndia is the current fiduciary and they cannot continue to carry that responsibility. Roland and Anand lead the discussion.

There were many comments on the topic that include:

- Theresa Tran said that she will check with her Board if APIAVote-MI can be an external financial fiduciary to MAPAAC. Mumtaz Haque and Henry Tanaka shared their earlier findings about creating a 501c3 foundation or a sister organization for fundraising purposes. They said that such an organization will have to have a separate board of directors and Bylaws/mission/vision and that can create potential conflict between the two organizations.
- Peter Wong was of the opinion that since MAPAAC now has a budget from the state of MI, we need to stop soliciting outside donations and not create a 501c3 organization. He suggested that the previously raised \$18,000 should be donated to a nonprofit.
- Anand Kumar stated that the IRS is stricter on nonprofits and that is part of the reason why MilIndia does not wish to continue to be the fiduciary organization. If we tell the donors we are raising the money for an event, then we need to document exactly what the money is being used for. Sook Wilkinson stated that in the past, funds were solicited for the "affairs of the commission."
- Anand echoed Peter Wong's opinion that we need to stop soliciting money until we sort out the fiduciary responsibilities.
- David Long commented that having a separate sister 501c3 organization can potentially impact the public perception of MAPAAC.
- Sook Wilkinson mentioned that funds were raised in the past through a fiduciary organization because MAPAAC did not have a formal budget allocation from the State.

She said that there are certain expenses that are not covered by the state budget. Sook was of the opinion that the money sitting with the MilIndia should be utilized for the Office for New American related activities.

- Connie observed that with the creation of a 501c3 will entail additional work and new liabilities to the commission. We need to weigh the benefits of the nonprofit and the liabilities.

Jamie raised a motion to inquire with APIAVote-MI if they would be willing to act as a fiduciary for MAPAAC. If APIA Vote-MI declines, we will go to other nonprofit organizations. Henry Tanaka second the motion. Nays: Peter Wong, Anand Kumar and Ryan Rosario. Motion passed by majority vote.

Jamie appointed an ad-hoc committee chaired by Roland Hwang to study the pros and cons of creating a Friends of MAPAAC organization. Committee members include Mumtaz Haque, Tsu-Yin Wu, Anand Kumar and Henry Tanaka. Tsu-Yin requested the commissioners to share their opinions by email. The committee was asked to provide the recommendations to the commissioners one week prior to the next commission meeting, to vote.

V. MAPAAC Tri-fold Brochure Discussion

Jamie said that the objective of the brochure is to tell what MAPAAC is all about, who we are, what we do, and how to work with us. We are looking for general comments about what should we emphasize in the brochure. Asim, Denise and Jamie will work to finalize the brochure. Denise explained the two sample versions of the brochure – A and B.

Comments included:

- Less emphasis on the commissioners. List only names with the ethnic community that they belong to.
- Add information about the SIGs to explain what we do
- The brochure should be generic enough so that it does not warrant regular revisions.
- Electronic information can be updated easily whereas updating printed information costs money.
- We need hard copies, because everyone in the Asian community does not have access to computers.
- Pictures will help the brochure
- The circles should be all the same sizes in the graphic
- Include all partner organizations, not just APA organizations
- The majority of the commissioners preferred the B version

VI. MAPAAC Operations Policies & Procedures and Administrator's Update:

Denise met with Mary and the MDCR team to review the book of policies and procedures for internal usage. Document highlights are:

- All commissioners must be a registered vendor/contractor with the State of Michigan. You must put the actual information, address and name, on the state of MI system as well as your reimbursement form.

- Any Public Facing information, interviews on behalf of MAPAAC, flyers, event information, and congratulatory letters, etc... must be channeled through MDCR communication director
- Ramesh asked to double-check the mileage rate of 0.39
- For reimbursements of travel - you must submit all original receipts with your reimbursement form to Mary.
- For any outstanding invoices please get with Jamie and Denise
- The operation handout is available on MAPAAC SkyDrive

Note: MAPAAC Facebook is part of the MDCR Social Media and managed by the state of MI.

SkyDrive access: Asim will email the instructions to have access to MAPAAC SkyDrive.

VII. Update of APA Heritage Month Celebration and Award Selection

Willie gave an update on the APA Heritage Month Celebration as followed:

- Celebrity MC will be Jennifer Pascua of WZZM13, Grand Rapids TV station
- Two program of entertainment
- The invitation to Dr. Roy Wilson, President of WSU, Japanese and African American decent for a potential keynote speaker has been sent to the MDCR Communication Dept. for approval.
- Invitation will be sent to the Mayor of Lansing directly and Governor Snyder through Mary McLellan.
- The executive committee decided not to solicit funds from any organizations. We will send letters to APA organizations inviting them to be sponsors and they need to send a representative to the celebration.
- We will not solicit corporate donations for the celebration
- The event expenses will be paid from the MAPAAC budget.
- Ambassadors will be dressed in ethnic attire
- The executive committee will work on the networking reception from 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Very similar to last year.

Connie reviewed the Champions Awards:

- Connie will be sending a letter and a nomination form and asking the commissioners to nominate individuals.
- Ramesh and the executive committee will constitute the awards committee
- April 11th is the deadline to submit a nomination to Denise at mapaac@outlook.com. After April 11th, we will convene and submit the names to the executive committee for the final selection.
- We will need three weeks to engrave the awards.
- A personal invitation will be sent to the awardee organizations. The celebration is open to everyone.
- Recommendation from Ramesh to open nominations to all outsiders. The commissioners can send the information to their contacts and all submissions must go through the commissioners for nominations.

VIII. Suggestions on 2015 Venues for Fred Korematsu Presentation

Roland provided three locations options:

- Lansing with MSU APA Students
- Troy with Oakland Schools
- Grand Rapids area

Sook commented that we should not limit to one location. All these locations and more can have the recognition day simultaneously.

We should add a Japanese school in Novi as a location for the recognition day. Toshiki offered to assist to contact the Japanese schools.

IX. Review Retreat Objectives and Focus for SIG Groups Work Plan

Jamie stated that we will continue with the current SIG groups and asked the new commissioners to select a SIG group to join. The following are brief reports from each SIG groups:

SIG 1: Asim is the Chair of the group. The purpose is to advise the Governor and the Legislators on program and policies and the goal is to support MDCR in making Michigan a welcoming state for APAs. The focus of the group is to participate in Racial Equity Initiative (REI) and cultural sensitivity. Target Hamtramck school district. The lead organization is APIA-Vote MI. He will inform the progress of the programs to the team.

SIG 2: Tsu-Yin is the Chair of this group and she shared the focus of the group to help and involve APAs and the goal is to connect model programs with new comers groups, educating government and school systems about APA cultures with special topics of health and well-being, social issues, immigration and education. In 2013, SIG II focused on the assisting APA communities for implementation of Affordable Care Act. With the funding support from MAPAAC, SIG II conducted six town hall meetings in Taiwanese, Filipino, Bangladesh, Burmese, Chinese, and Vietnamese communities and educate APA individuals about the essential benefits about ACA. Among all the Asian sub-groups, we only have Chinese and Bangladesh navigators and it's not adequate to serve all the APA communities We need to continue to advocate for additional services for future implementation of ACA in upcoming years. SIG II will continue the efforts on advancing healthcare education and access to APA communities.

SIG 3: Henry is the Chair and he shared that the goal is equality of access. Serve as a reporting agencies and harassment in the state and making recommendations to governor and legislature regarding methods of overcoming discrimination against APAs in public and private employment and civil and political rights and promote methods to ensure equal access to state services for APAs. We printed a report to review APAs college admissions and to see if there is a ceiling or any type of discrimination for access to a 4-year school and we haven't seen any evidence of discrimination. Also, we worked with the EEOC to look at discrimination in housing and employment. The third one is the disparities in the sub-ethnic groups within the APA communities as far as college completion.

Jamie thanked and encouraged the SIG groups to continue their work between our regular meetings. The SIG groups will decide the focus and emphasis for their group for the coming year. He commented that the Governor's Office for New Americans and initiatives of business and the economy are not addressed in the existing the SIG groups and we need to decide if we would like to fold in these initiatives in the existing SIGs groups or create new SIG groups.

Peter suggested to look at Sook's survey of issues of the APA communities as a focus for the SIG groups. Jamie will send the list of issues to the groups to determine if they want to fold it in their group's focus. If there are remaining issues, we need to determine if we want to create another SIG group. Jamie will send out the current issues of the SIG groups to the new commissioners to decide which group they would like to serve on and to be involved with.

X. Budget Update and Approval:

Peter presented the status of the budget for the 2014 fiscal year line by line.

There was a discussion on the \$30K earmarked/allotted for three areas.

- Requests on budget items or SIG group projects are to be submitted to Denise.
- Allocated money to attend events to give the commissioners exposure.

Sook motioned to approve the tentative budget as a working budget. Nasim seconded it. Peter abstained. Motion passed.

Jamie thanked Peter for his diligence with the commission's budget

XI. Selection of Venues for 2014 Commission Meetings

Suggested Locations:

- Varieties APA community centers
- Eastern Michigan University
- Lansing
- Oakland Community College – Farmington Hills (Saturday location)
- International Institute - Detroit
- Upper Peninsula
- Battle Creek
- Kalamazoo
- Between Lansing and Detroit – Novi Area
- Go to an area where we never been
- Get in touch the municipalities and politicians have the meeting in their building

Jamie stated we shall develop a criteria for selecting sites. Based on the criteria we will select a location for our June meeting. We can create an ad-hoc committee on site selection if needed. Commissioners can email suggestions and join us in selection of sites.

Suggested criteria:

- We accommodate as many commissioners participation
- Show our presence to the community, public officials and municipalities

XII. New Business:

Soraya Kim shared a request from the Korean Community asking for support for an event in collaboration with the Livonia Symphony Orchestra for 2015, which is being worked on. Also, the Livonia Symphony is willing to promote one ethnic community per year to collaborate together. If the commissioners would like to know about this offer, please contact her.

XIII. Public Comments

There was no public comments.

XIV: Announcements:

Sook Wilkinson has authored a book, "Asian Americans in Michigan," which the Wayne State University Press Board has approved for publication. The book is scheduled to be out by summer 2015.

Peter Wong's Comments:

- Should we create an ad-hoc committee to investigate why the public is not attending our meetings and how we can attract them to attend our meeting since all commission meetings are open to the public. The consensus from the commissioners on inviting the public to our meetings was that it should be strictly by invitation only to speak in front of the commission.

XV: Adjournment:

Peter motioned to adjourn. Sook seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:33 p.m.

Minutes Prepared by: Denise Y Grim

Minutes submitted by:

Asim Alavi , Secretary

Appendix A

Transcript of Bing Goei's Questions and Answers Session